

School Trips: Keeping Children Safe

Visit planning and risk assessment

1. Generic – Policies and procedures that apply across a range of visits. This is guidance or practice that remains constant regardless of the nature of the visit. It covers the management of risks identified as relevant to all visits involving similar activities.

2. Visit-specific – Carried out before the visit takes place. This is the identification and management of any risks not already covered through generic risk management. It is unique to each occasion and should address staffing, activity, group and environment.

3. Dynamic/on-going – Carried out continuously throughout the visit. This refers to the on-going monitoring of all aspects of the visit/activity by the visit leadership team. The group and the level of risk must be monitored and assessed throughout and, if circumstances dictate, activities should be curtailed or amended (e.g. change to plan B).

The following considerations may help ensure trips away from school are as safe as possible, and that communication with the school is clear should there be an emergency. Keep this information confidential for adults participating in the trip only, issue to volunteers on the day. Do not share with parents who, if concerned, may start making independent phone calls.

- Make sure there is a good adult : pupil ratio. There must be trained first aiders, a first aid kit must be carried. Medication for specific children must be taken with clear pupil information.
- Have high vis vests for all adults and children
- Consider school mobile phones with minimum price SIM or pay as you go.
- All adults on the trip to have a mobile phone, they can use their own phones if there are no school mobiles; a list of all numbers issued to adults on the trip, on the day, and confidentially disposed of at the end of the day. Data protection must be adhered to.
- Make sure you have landline as well as mobile phone number contacts for parents, as far as possible. Have a clear telephone tree for use in an emergency.
- Make sure the staff in school know what actions to take should there be an emergency. The information they need and actions they should take should be written down. In an emergency a staff member may be easily distracted.
- Have alternative transport routes planned. Even if you are on a coach know at least 2 routes to and from your venue - don't assume the driver will have this planned, the driver may rely on satnav; if there are problems be ready to offer advice.
- Have more than one tube/train route planned. Know which bus numbers you could take if there was a problem.

- Have transport plans printed, or saved on a device, accessible even if Internet/ phone signals go down.
- Alternative transport suggestions are likely to mean delays, but would enable safe alternative travel.
- Have a refuge place identified near to your destination, maybe a hotel. If there were transport shut down, if mobile phone networks went down, your staff would take the children there. It would be very unlikely that a hotel would turn away a group of children if there was a serious problem. You don't need to inform the hotel they are your place of refuge, you just make sure all adults on the trip know, and know how to get there. The school would be able to ring the hotel, they'd have a landline. Safe communication could be established.

Useful advice and resources:

- DfE - Health and safety: advice on legal duties and powers For local authorities, school leaders, school staff and governing bodies
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335111/DfE_Health_and_Safety_Advice_06_02_14.pdf
School employers should always take a common sense and proportionate approach, remembering that in schools risk assessment and risk management are tools to enable children to undertake activities safely, and not prevent activities from taking place.
- Health and Safety Executive
 School trips and outdoor learning activities Tackling the health and safety myths
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf>
HSE fully recognises that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life – it provides deeper subject learning and increases self-confidence. It also helps pupils develop their risk awareness and prepares them for their future working lives. Striking the right balance between protecting pupils from risk and allowing them to learn from school trips has been a challenge for many schools, but getting this balance right is essential for realising all these benefits in practice.
- Government guidance - Recognising the terrorist threat
 Stay safe : terrorist attacks
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recognising-the-terrorist-threat/recognising-the-terrorist-threat#stay-safe--terrorist-firearms-and-weapons-attacks>
- National guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom
<http://oeapng.info/visit-leader/>
Includes useful templates, including Visit Leader Emergency Card and specific guidance for the Visit Leader.